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Arthur C. Hathaway
816 Chestnut Street
Cheney, WA 99004-1267

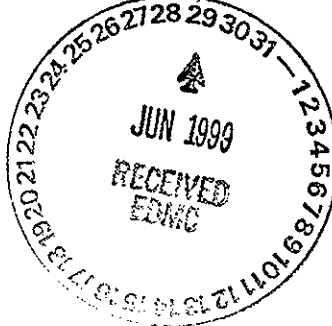
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DOE-RL / DIS

June 5, 1999

Mr. Thomas W. Ferns
U.S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550, MSN HO-12
Richland, WA 99352-0550



Dear Mr. Ferns:

I am pleased to comment on the Environmental Impact Statement for the Hanford Reach Area in the State of Washington.

For over 30 years, I have been aware that the Hanford Reach is the last free-flowing segment of the Columbia River in the United States, providing critical spawning and rearing habitat for fall chinook salmon; and that the Hanford Site is also one of the last intact places in eastern Washington supporting hundreds of diverse native shrub-steppe plants and animals, some of which are rare and could become endangered without adequate habitat protection.

I believe that the highest and best use of the adjoining DOE lands at Hanford would be as a permanent National Wildlife Refuge to include: the entire Wahluke Slope, the Hanford Reach, the Columbia River Islands, the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve, and the McGee Ranch. Agriculture, livestock grazing and mining are incompatible with the protection of natural ecosystems and should not be permitted within central Hanford or the protected lands of the permanent National Wildlife Refuge.

I appreciate the desires of local interests to want to exploit and develop lands adjoining central Hanford, but I believe these area are important enough to be of national interest and should be treated as such. I therefor support the Preferred Alternative contained in the HRA EIS, but with the above mentioned modifications, and request that the DOE issue separate decisions on the five areas mentioned above in order to expedite a final decision.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to comment on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Arthur C. Hathaway'.